

GIANT FULL-COLOR PINUP OF TOMMY RICH

July 1981
\$1.50

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PRO Wrestling ILLUSTRATED

TV.
SPORTS

Sgt. Slaughter Learns:

**THE PAINFUL
VENGEANCE
OF PEDRO
MORALES**



**NWA Bans Masked Wrestlers!
WILL MIL MASCARAS
UNMASK OR QUIT?**

**Mr. Wrestling II Suffers...
THE HEARTBREAK OF
A FRIEND GONE BAD!**

**THE VIOLENT WORLD OF
DUSTY RHODES**



KING'S COURT

By Peter King

PAT PATTERSON would be the first to admit he's more courageous than he is smart. He's had more than his share of unscheduled dressing room brawls and arena run-ins.

"They've been humdingers," Patterson said.

So it should have come as no surprise to the millions watching on television when Patterson, who does color commentary on the WWF telecasts, found himself in the middle of the ring, dressed in streetclothes, with Sgt.

Slaughter's beefy hands around his throat.

"I just couldn't sit back and watch anymore," Patterson admitted.

But first, a little background to the incident. Sgt. Slaughter has issued a challenge to any wrestler to escape from his dreaded Cobra Clutch. If a wrestler can escape, Slaughter promises to pay him \$5,000.

The challenge works like this: A chair is brought into the ring. The challenger sits in it and Slaughter comes up behind him, applying the Clutch, but without any pressure. A referee signals the challenge to begin, and Slaughter locks his hands around the wrestler's neck. If the challenger escapes, he wins. If he loses consciousness, Slaughter wins.

For about a month, Slaughter turned back all challengers. After each success, he would strut from the ring and taunt Patterson, who was sitting at the broadcasters' booth. Pat would get angry, but he would restrain himself from any physical retaliation. He was, after all, employed as a sportscaster, not a wrestler. He knew he couldn't attack Slaughter.

"Would Walter Cronkite attack the Ayatollah Khomeini?" asked Patterson.

But the tension between the two men grew so thick fans felt they could almost touch it through their television sets. On one telecast, the uneasy truce between a wrestler and a sportscaster became an open war between two superstar grapplers.

It happened the night no one would accept Slaughter's challenge. Slaughter walked

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Sgt. Slaughter boldly offers WWF television commentator Pat Patterson \$10,000 if he could break his Cobra Clutch as Vince McMahon Jr. mediates. Patterson accepted—and all hell broke loose!

RINGSIDE

With Bill Apter



Sir Oliver Humperdink has devised a scheme whereby The Assassins switch identities during the course of a match.

IHAVE SEEN it with my own eyes.

Assassin #1 is wrestling an opponent. Outside the ring stands Assassin #2 and manager Sir Oliver Humperdink. As soon as Assassin #1 is in trouble, Humperdink distracts the referee and the Assassins make a quick switch behind the referee's back.

This must be stopped! I was on the committee that had Sir Oliver Humperdink investigated for attempting to burn out the eyes of Mr. Florida with a lit cigar. Now I demand that Humperdink be investigated again—thoroughly. The Assassins used this trick to win the North American Tag Team tournament over Barry Windham

and Manny Fernandez. It's simply disgraceful!

Tommy Rich is back in Georgia and he has made it very clear that The Fabulous Freebirds are not long for this world. "I cannot believe what has been going on since I left Georgia," Rich says. "These Freebirds have been
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DRESSING CONFIDENTIAL ROOM

By Stu Saks

DUSTY RHODES IS past the point in his life of throwing temper tantrums when he's upset. Oh, but you know when he's upset. Rhodes is a grumbler. And he's been doing some heavy grumbling lately.

"I don't remember the last time I was so annoyed," he said, buttering a stack of pancakes. "You take a man into your home... oh, it hurts just talking about it."

Dusty jabbed his fork through six layers of pancakes, and that was about the extent of any kind of physical display of emotion he would show.

We were in Rosie's Diner on Biscayne Blvd. in Miami. Dusty had called and said he needed someone to talk to. I was on assignment in Florida and only too willing to accommodate him. I can't even remember how many times Dusty has sat and talked with me, trying to iron out *my* problems.

Now Dusty has a problem. His name is Sir Oliver Humperdink.

Not long ago, Dusty Rhodes and Humperdink had a clear-cut relationship. They hated one another. Humperdink imported wrestler after wrestler, each more vicious than the last, all with a bonus clause in their contract that would set them up financially for the rest of their lives if they ended the career of a man named Dusty Rhodes.

But Dusty was too formidable



Sir Oliver Humperdink seemed so sincere months back when he befriended his former rival, Dusty Rhodes. Humperdink duped Dusty and the entire wrestling world into thinking he was going straight.

for any of Humperdink's would-be hitmen. Finally, Humperdink thought he had the right man for the job. The same man who knocked off Bruno Sammartino 10 years ago when most people gave him no chance. The Russian Bear, Ivan Koloff.

Humperdink had so much confidence in his man that he made a side bet with Dusty stipulating that Dusty would have to shave off his hair if Koloff won. Humperdink would serve as Dusty's valet for 30 days if

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A ON ASSIGNMENT

BY STEVEN FARHOOD

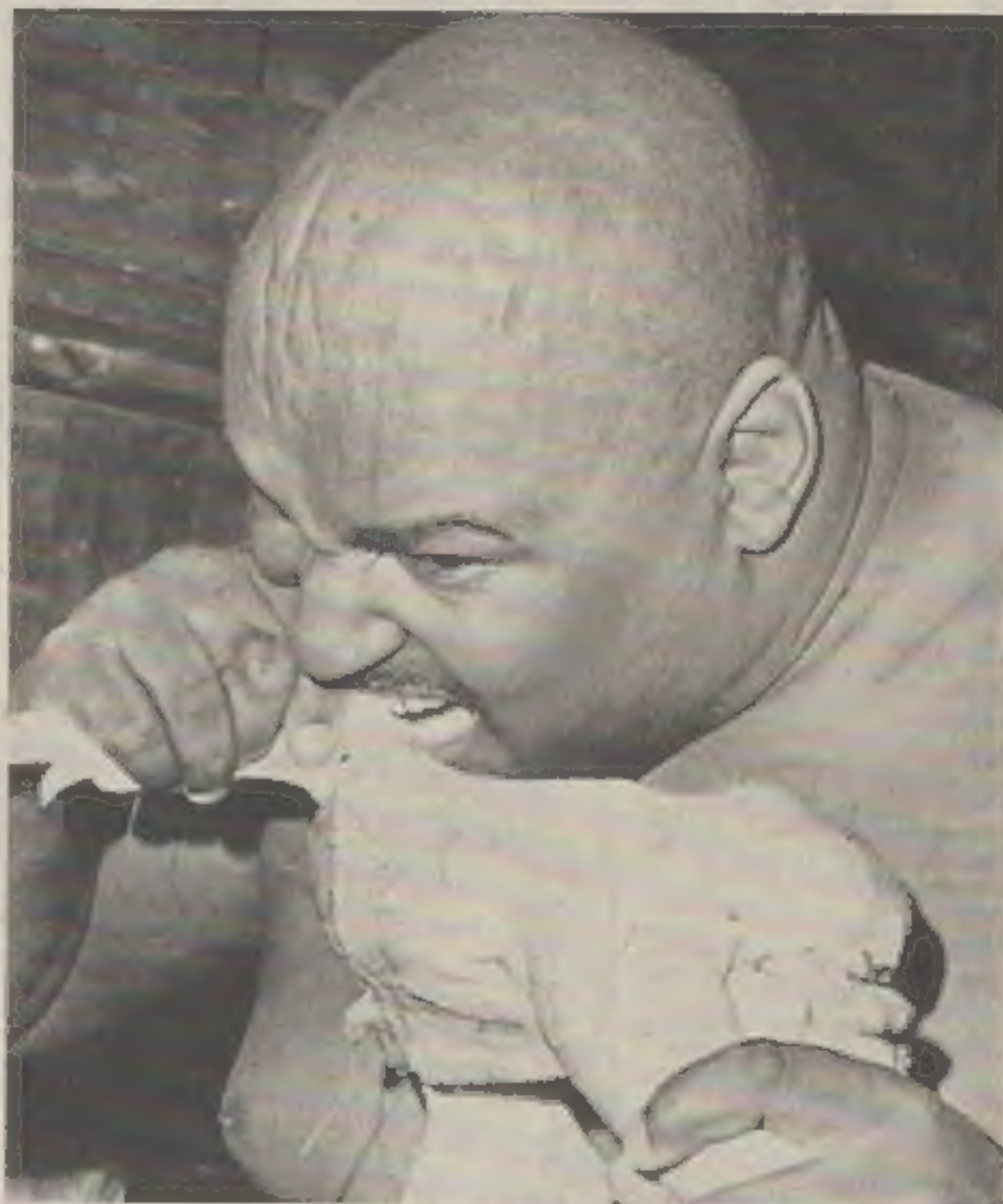
TWO YEARS OF traveling and writing wrestling on the road. A lot of pleasant memories. And some dreadful ones. A few of the moments that stick out:

- Driving on an interstate highway in Minnesota with Verne Gagne. We're pulled over by a cop who tells us we're going 65. Then he realizes who the driver is. He rips up the ticket, begs for Gagne's forgiveness, and asks for his autograph. Gagne signs his name to a piece of paper. The cop thanks him and starts to walk away. Gagne calls him back. "If I went over the speed limit, I want that ticket," he says to the cop. Do you think Nick Bockwinkel would've done the same thing?

- Receiving three different death threats from a certain rulebreaker who has been infuriated by what he considers to be "bad press." I know who he is, he knows I know, but it all ends there. I report the truth. He doesn't like facing up to the truth. I'll keep writing what I want. Sure, he scares me. He'd scare anybody. But that's the nature of the business.

I could probably have sent him to prison if I informed the FBI of all this. But I'm a journalist, not a stoofie. Only one thing keeps me off-balance. If the rulebreaker's death threats haven't worked, what will he try next?

- Spending two days with Abdullah the Butcher in Georgia. The story never made the magazine because Matt



After looking at a picture of Abdullah the Butcher snacking on a raw chicken, why would Matt Brock and Peter King question the validity of Steve Farhood's story on his two-day stay with this crazed animal?

Brock and Peter King wouldn't believe the stories I told them. They thought I was making everything up. I told them they didn't know Abdullah. When Matt Brock doesn't believe something, you *know* it's pretty wild.

There are some wild characters in wrestling. Bruiser

Brodie has given me cause to question his sanity, and I'm positive George Steele isn't all there. But if Abdullah is really part of the human race, I'll eat this magazine. What did Abdullah do while I was with him? Aw, you probably wouldn't believe it either.

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THE MORGENSTEIN REPORT.....

By Gary Morgenstein

ANOTHER WIZ FIND

Despite his tactics, The Grand Wizard deserves considerable credit for always finding another young guy to push his ambitions of WWF conquest. This time around, it's Magnificent Muraco, former Florida champion and a first-class meanie. Muraco possesses

strength, speed, and intelligence, exactly what Wiz looks for in a wrestler. But if it's not Muraco then it's someone else. Wiz is tireless in searching every area of the country for men who will do his bidding. Sooner or later, Wiz will have his dream: Bob Backlund's WWF title wrapped around the waist of one of his own men.



THE GRAND WIZARD

COOL IT, RICK

In the past couple of months, Rick Steamboat has embraced a new philosophy he believes, coupled with his innate skills, will lead him to the United States heavyweight title, now held by Roddy Piper. But I firmly believe Steamboat has yet to find that perfect medium. I think he's trying to accommodate himself to this philosophy, instead of the other way around. Steamboat should borrow and take what is needed, always molding the words and the meaning to what suits him best. I fear Steamboat will control his aggressiveness in the mistaken attempt to control his temper. The fire in his gut makes Steamboat go. That aggressiveness is what has elevated him to the top, not any philosophy. In the end, it is Rick Steamboat who will win world championship, whether he is guided by thousands of years of Asian thought or not.

HAYES THE BRAINS?

The more I see of The Fabulous Freebirds, current Georgia tag team champions, the more I'm convinced the guiding light behind their success is Michael Hayes.



MICHAEL HAYES

While Terry Gordy and Buddy Roberts are superb athletes, it is Hayes who furnishes the inspiration and direction. Nothing underlines this contention more than a recent match against Ted DiBiase and Robert Fuller. While Gordy and Roberts struggled, Hayes was handcuffed to Junkyard Dog and unable to compete. There was a great deal lacking in The Freebirds' game without Hayes. Every great tag team needs that intangible force, that person who can both stoke and light the fires of impassioned wrestling. Hayes is just such a man. Admittedly, I erred in assessing The Freebirds when they first entered Georgia. I thought that Gordy and Roberts could do very well without Hayes. Now I think it's the other way around. It wouldn't surprise me in the least to see Michael Hayes capture an individual title before the end of the year.

If you wish to contribute to Shocket's mailbag, send your letters to:

TOP ROPE
Box 48
Rockville Centre, N.Y.
11571

OFF THE TOP ROPE

By Dan Shocket

THIS LAST MONTH has seen a great deal of mail containing threats to beat me up. Well, gang, here's your choice. I hereby announce "The Dan Shocket Thrashing Elimination Tournament." Everyone who wishes to do me bodily harm will meet in a soon to be announced stadium in Kansas. There will be a series of matches; the winner gets to meet me. Send in your application today. Then hold your breath until I get back to you.

And now, on to your letters:

Dear Dan,

I am writing because I'm sick and tired of reading all the wrestling magazines running down Larry Zbyszko. He is a wonderful person and a good wrestler.

I stood behind him when he wrestled scientifically and I'll stand behind him as long as he's a so-called rulebreaker.

I feel Sammartino and Garea deserved everything they got from him. All he did was try to make a name for himself and what did people do? They turned against him. I only hope



Larry Zbyszko has long been unfairly dumped upon by magazines and fans, writes "Top Rope" contributor Nancy Heiney.

someday people understand. I hope Larry accomplishes everything he has set out to do, because he sure deserves it.

NANCY HEINEY
Whitehall, PA

Dear Nancy,

Of course, I couldn't agree more with your sensitive letter. It's a pity the fans can't appreciate Larry. It's a tragedy they find Sammartino's megalomania and Garea's treachery admirable.

Dear Mr. Shocket,

It's very upsetting to criticize a man who has managed some of history's greatest wrestlers, but I do have some complaint about Lou Albano's recent tag team, The Moondogs.

It seems as though the Captain is merely canvassing the local asylums and bribing attendants to let the mental cases out. Really, Dan, any men who willingly act like dogs are in need of psychiatric help.

I hope Lou straightens out his priorities before he turns the WWF into a zoo.

KEN ZALEWSKI
Chicago, IL

Dear Mr. Zalewski,

It's easy to understand why even intelligent fans are made uncomfortable by The Moondogs' more bizarre antics. Yet, Albano is a genius, and genius can often be confusing to us lesser mortals. Before condemning him, I think we should give him more time. Also, a genius can make mistakes. Though I don't think The Moondogs are a mistake, we shall see.



Dan Shocket believes we should not judge The Moondogs too hastily.

Dear Mr. Shocket,

I decided to write this letter in regard to the letters you often get about Bob Backlund. People have been putting Bob Backlund down for a long time. I think it's time someone said something good about him.

He is not a "despicable coward" like you say, but he is really a great champion. He has defended his belt against men like Killer Khan, Sgt. Slaughter, and other top men. He has



A reader by the name of John Backlund feels that Bob Backlund is one of the greatest wrestlers of all-time. Any relation? He did not say.

never yet been defeated. He will go down as being one of the best champions ever and will be respected by all the fans for a long time to come.

JOHN BACKLUND
Marlboro, MA

Dear Mr. Backlund,

Though you may not be a relative of the champion, you should certainly be mentioned in his will. People who think Bob Backlund is great are right down there with people who believe the earth is flat and Andre the Giant is dynamic.

Dear Mr. Shocket:

Well sir, you were absolutely correct! Tommy Rich went back

to being a fan favorite (not mine!). In fact, it came as little surprise.

Out here in California, we get Georgia wrestling. Watching Rich wrestle was about as exciting as watching Dusty Rhodes grow a beard! Many people don't realize it, but it takes a special talent to be a rulebreaker. Tommy Rich couldn't cut it, and maybe it's for the better. Now he can rejoin the likes of Bob "Gerber Baby" Backlund and Verne "Slow Motion Ocean" Gagne!

LOUIS MORENO
Sunnyvale, CA

Dear Mr. Moreno,

That just about says it all. □

Every month, three reporters from **PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED** will participate in an incisive press conference with a top wrestling star. The questions will be demanding. And the answers will reveal the innermost thoughts of the giants of the sport

PRESS CONFERENCE THE FREEBIRDS



(To say the very least, The Fabulous Freebirds are the most unusual tag team to hit professional wrestling in many a year. Michael Hayes, Terry Gordy, and Buddy Roberts have formed a corporation, designed to both confuse and destroy all opposition. Their wrestling style is brutally unique, their ambitions crystal clear: complete dominance of all Georgia wrestling. Interviewing The Freebirds on this month's **PRESS CONFERENCE**, are Editor-in-Chief Peter King and Associate Editors Steve Farhood and Stu Saks.)

"We blend our genius, our grace, our wit, our beauty into one package, the sum being greater than the parts, the sum so good with each and every part working together."



PETER KING: Freebirds, I'd like to direct our first question to . . .

BUDDY ROBERTS: No, no, King, you don't tell us to answer, we decide. We're the champions.

STEVE FARHOOD: Is this the same way you wrestle, collective decisions?

MICHAEL HAYES: That's right, we blend our genius, our grace, our wit, our beauty into one package, the sum being greater than the parts, the sum so good with each and every part working together. Few wrestlers understand this principle. Fact, no one understands it like us.

STU SAKS: Would you just explain that, please?

TERRY GORDY: Be happy to.

We appreciate that every part of us is important. We know that it's no good without a mind and without a body and without courage. That's why we are superior people and a superior tag team, unlike say Robert Fuller and Ted DiBiase or the Brisco babies.

FARHOOD: What does separate you from them?

ROBERTS: That we have the guts to be different, to find a different and better way of whipping their hides. We know what had to be done. We were the first, the only, the last because there won't ever be another team like us.

KING: Do you credit the fact there are three of you with this success?

HAYES: You think we need

three of us? You don't think me or Terry or Buddy could beat up three of them all by ourselves? You gotta be kidding, man. Robert Fuller can't find his way out of a bathroom stall without help and DiBiase gotta be the dumbest person walking the earth. I won't even mention the Briscos 'cause they are not worthy of our thoughts or words.

SAKS: How did you hit upon the idea to form a corporation?

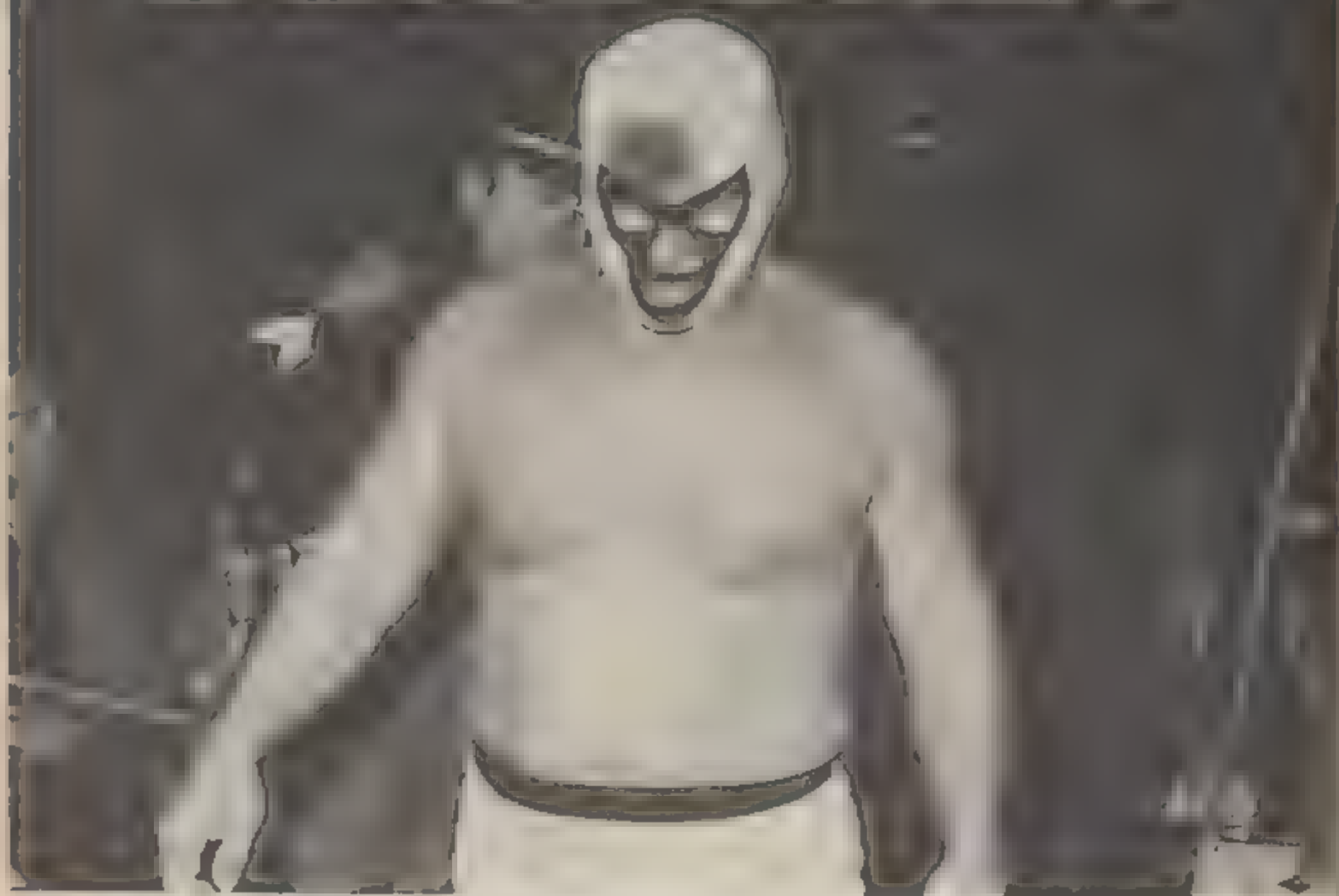
GORDY: It seemed the best way of getting what we want in Georgia. This corporation gives us the flexibility we wanted so as to avoid the kinda cheap-shot stunts the dudes down here practice.

FARHOOD: Which dudes?

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Mr. Wrestling II Suffers...
**THE HEARTBREAK
OF A FRIEND**

GONE BAD!



In his long and illustrious career, Mr. Wrestling II has endured more than his share of disappointments. He has risen to the top, lost titles, lost close matches, been betrayed, been injured. But time after time, the masked man insists nothing hurts more than a friend gone bad

Mr. Wrestling II is at first reluctant to severely punish his former friend.



MR WRESTLING II will never forget the first time he met him.

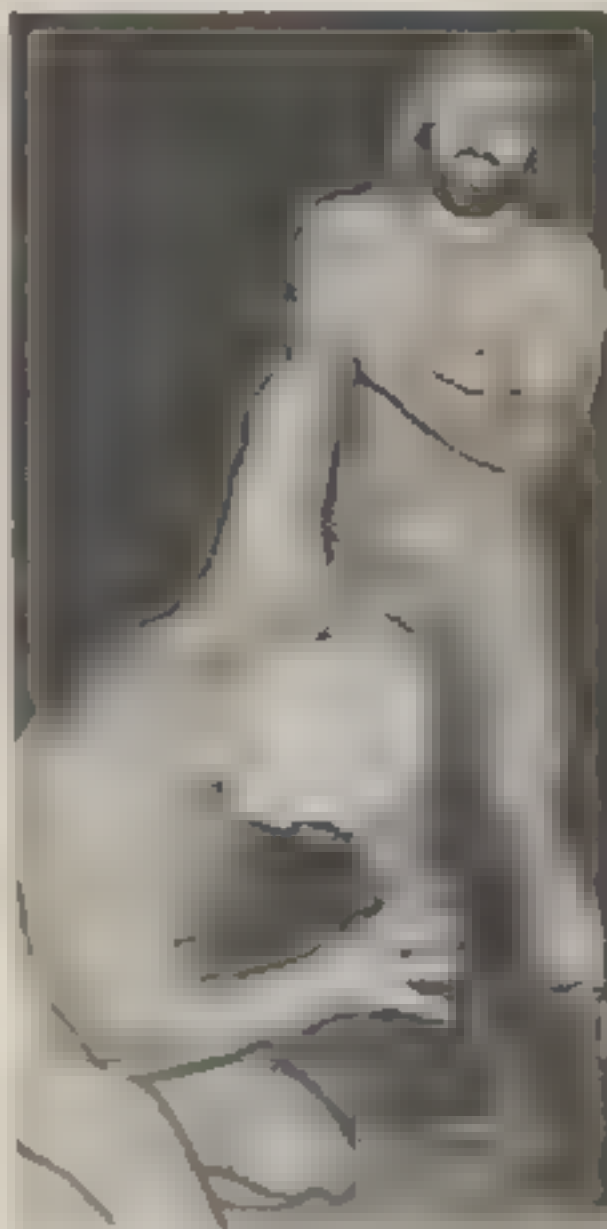
"He was just a kid, a nice, polite kid with a heckuva lot of guts and ambition," recalled II. "I took an immediate liking to him. You can tell what a guy's got in his gut just by looking into his eyes.

"Sometimes you can tell if he's a cheat or a liar or if he'll turn on you. I never got that feeling from him. I always thought he was brimming with honesty. At that point, I would've trusted him with my life.

II paused to adjust the bottom of his mask.

"I really wanted to help the kid. I wanted to help him do whatever he wanted to do. He came up to me, that first day, and asked what he had to do to make it as a world champion. I told him to work hard, train hard, keep himself in constant shape and always remember it's the fans who put you there, the fans who keep you there and your friends who hold you up when things get

PHOTOS BY MAGGIE ADKINS



But as II begins to understand that Sullivan has truly turned, his anger begins to mount. Kevin will not be able to maintain this wristlock for long.

tough.

"He nodded, really happy, and then he was like my shadow for a while.

Everytime I'd be in the gym, working out, he'd be right behind me. I couldn't do anything without him watching and trying to learn from me.

"Yeah, I gave him everything I knew. I didn't hold back on any of my secrets. I believed in the kid, really wanted him to succeed in this crazy sport. Yeah, I thought he'd be a great scientific wrestler, a sure champion someday, someday soon.

"And yeah, I was wrong. But that's not what hurts so much."

II leaned back and folded his arms across his wide chest, his eyes leaping behind his mask toward some inner introspection.

"What really hurts, okay, I do hurt and I am angry, know what I mean? No one likes to trust a person and call him friend and then have that guy spin around and stick a big one in your back. No one likes that. But it's him that bugs me.

"All this time, he said how he wanted to wrestle me but the promoters would never

do it, and I always told him we were such good friends, who needs whatever might result from a match between us. Friendship, in my black book, means a lot more than any kind of match.

"But he kept telling me he wanted the match. Well, now that he got the match, I hope Kevin Sullivan is satisfied."

II's mask twisted in anger and he stormed off to the other side of the dressing room.

Sullivan's ruthless quest for a match against Mr. Wrestling II took him along a sordid, shocking, albeit familiar path. Not content with wrestling cleanly and having fans love him, Sullivan abruptly turned his back on the scientific



Sullivan's attention seems to be focused on the disapproving fans as he drops an elbow across the back of II's neck (above). Any physical pain Sullivan could cause with his wristlock (below) could not match the pain II felt by seeing his good friend turn against him.



wrestlers of Georgia, and fans everywhere.

"Who needs the fans, anyway?" hissed Sullivan.

"They're all oafs and fools, not a brain among all of 'em. I don't need their stupid voices screamin' in my ear,

confusin' me. I know what I'm doing and I don't need some dippy little kid yellin' at me. Who the hell do the fans think they are? They think they can give advice to a great like me, a guy who knows everything, a guy who is invincible and brilliant and good-looking? Think I need grief listenin' to them?

"Know how many hours of my life I've wasted signing autographs for these idiots when I could've been doing something constructive with my life? Thousands, that's how many, thousands and thousands of hours of my life right on down the drain, wasted on those morons and geeks.

"Even worse, know how my career's been ruined by morons and old oafs like II? Plenty. I'd probably be champion of the whole world by now if I hadn't been dumb enough to listen to II. Hell, I should've realized he had nothing useful to tell me. If he was so hot, why isn't he champion?

"He's not champion and never will be champion because he's slow and boring. I'm the rising star, the next superstar, and I just want to clear all the debris out of my path, fools like Mr. Wrestling II."

II entered the match armed with the knowledge of Sullivan's feelings and intent. When their brutal match ended, II re-entered the dressing room and slumped onto a stool. He had nothing to say, nothing more to prove, no great speech or threats to issue.

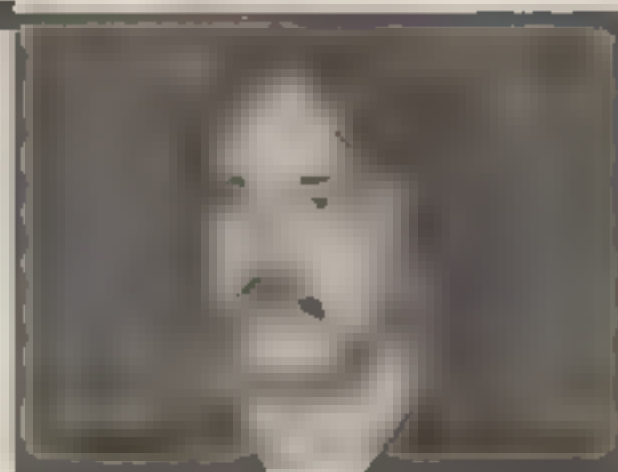
All II had were the tears sliding down his white mask as the memory of a friend, never more, filled his grief-stricken body. □

WHAT THEY ARE SAYING

Every month, our reporters will compile wrestlers' most revealing quotes. Often catching the grapplers with their guards down, our reporters will work endlessly in obtaining interesting quotes on a variety of subjects

RICK STEARNS

"I understand many of my loyal fans are, as yet, unable to comprehend what changes I have been through. I want to assure them all that no matter what goes on inside my head, I will always be loyal to them and unbending in my resolve to wrest away the United States heavyweight title from Roddy Piper."



DON MURACO

"Coming into the WWF is an interesting experience, but I wish the competition was a little stiffer. When this territory has a champion like Bob Backlund, the Intercontinental champion is Pedro Morales, and the grand old man is Bruno Sammartino, you know things are bad and just waiting for someone like me to come in and conquer all three."



CAPTAIN LOB LARSEN

"They can say what they want about The Moondogs, they can say what they want about the Captain, but you can't knock success, you can't look away from what I've done, what I will do, what I must do, all my critics are useless, their words are useless, their brains are useless, they will never stop the Captain, no, never!"



JERRY LAWLER

"Far as I'm concerned, Jimmy Hart is dead in his tracks as of this moment. He may think he's alive, he may act like he's alive, but he's a dead man 'cause Mr. Jerry Lawler is after his hide and Mr. Jerry Lawler always pays back traitors. So all you friends of Hart, go get your black suits pressed 'cause you're gonna need them."



Continued on page 66,

NWA Bans Masked Wrestlers!

WILL

THERE ARE EIGHT members of the NWA Board of Commissioners. One of them is Masked Grappler!

How he came to gain a seat on this prestigious board and how he misused that sacred duty makes for compelling reading. But the real victim is Mil Mascaras. Only through Mascaras' guile and courage was he able to abort this conspiracy and upset Grappler.

Let us go back two months to a startling decision reached by the eight-member commission. By way of explanation, any decision adopted as official NWA policy must have more than a majority vote. Any policy change requires a margin of 6-2, or 75 percent.

"This new guy, real big guy, heavyset, always had a mean look on his face, proposed this measure," recalled an elderly member of the panel. "It was a bit far-out, but he had this persuasive way about him, almost menacing, and a real dynamic speaking voice which simply captured you and made you want to go along with him."

After several hours of heated debate, the motion passed, 7-1. The sole dissenter, a middle-aged woman from Athens, Georgia, spoke of the strange occurrences following the vote.

"For the next week after that vote, I got strange phone calls, heard weird noises outside my house and didn't receive mail for three days. I found that strange," she recollected.

The exact wording of this

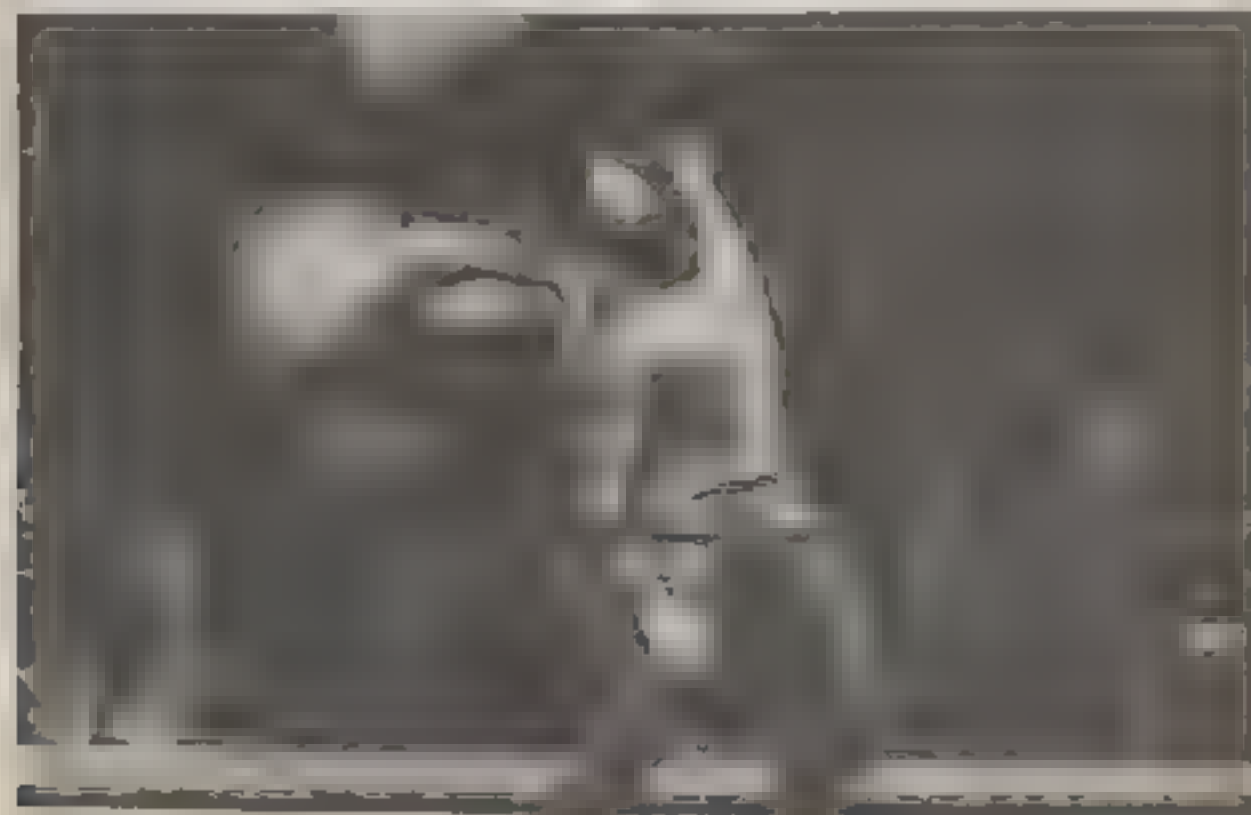
The NWA startled all when it issued this directive: For a period of one month, no wrestler would be allowed to compete wearing a mask. That presented Mil Mascaras with a devastating problem. Would the man of a thousands masks quit, rather than unmask?



MIL MASCARAS UNMASK OR QUIT?



Mascaras drives his knee into Austin Idol's back as he yanks back on his arms (above). Kurt Von Steiger falls to the mat after a Mascaras backdrop (below.) Could Mil be the same man without his mask?



startling proposal was

"For a period of 30 days, no masked wrestler who has not been wrestling in the Atlanta area for the last 60 days, on a regular basis, may wrestle in Atlanta while wearing a mask."

Obviously this proposal was more than fair to all established Georgia wrestlers. But it directly affected the impending plans of one Mil Mascaras.

"I could not believe it when I heard that law," said Mil. "I had to decide whether I would take off my mask to wrestle or be forced into dropping all my plans to wrestle in Atlanta."

"Even considering removing my mask fills me with great despair. I do not think fans realize how important my masks are to me. It is like my arm, my eyes, my legs. I could not live without my mask. It is as much a part of Mil Mascaras as another man's hands are."

"But I did have obligations in Georgia. I miss those wonderful fans in that area and always look forward to seeing old friends again. So I struggled with this and was on the verge of reaching a monumental decision when I realized the best way would be to learn why this particular measure had been adopted."

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Sgt. Slaughter Learns:

PHOTOS BY STU SAKS

THE PAINFUL VENGEANCE OF PEDRO MORALES



The young man came to Pedro Morales because he'd always heard what a decent fellow the Intercontinental champion was. And once Pedro heard this young man's story, he went berserk. He vowed to pay back the person responsible. He vowed to put all his energies to punishing the culprit. And the culprit is Sgt. Slaughter, USMC



If Sgt. Slaughter has never had the opportunity to see himself on television, Morales is graciously (?) giving him the opportunity (opposite left). Slaughter desperately tries to hold onto the ropes, but Pedro is intent on whipping him to the opposite turnbuckles (above). The Intercontinental champ flings his challenger across the ring as referee Jack Lotz maintains a careful watch (below).



THE SLENDER YOUNG man with the nervous tic sat across from Pedro Morales, as he had sat for nearly an hour, relating his story. Throughout the tale, Morales never flinched, except to crush a beer can.

I signed up for the Marines 'cause I wanted to be a man," said the youngster from Charlotte, North Carolina, who preferred anonymity. "I always respected the Marines. I wanted to be a lifer and all. I dreamed of rising through the ranks and becoming a sergeant. I wanted to be a Marine. I would have been a good Marine."

Tears welled in the young man's eyes. Morales still didn't move. Rage was sweeping through him.

"I remember the first day of boot camp. The drill instructor



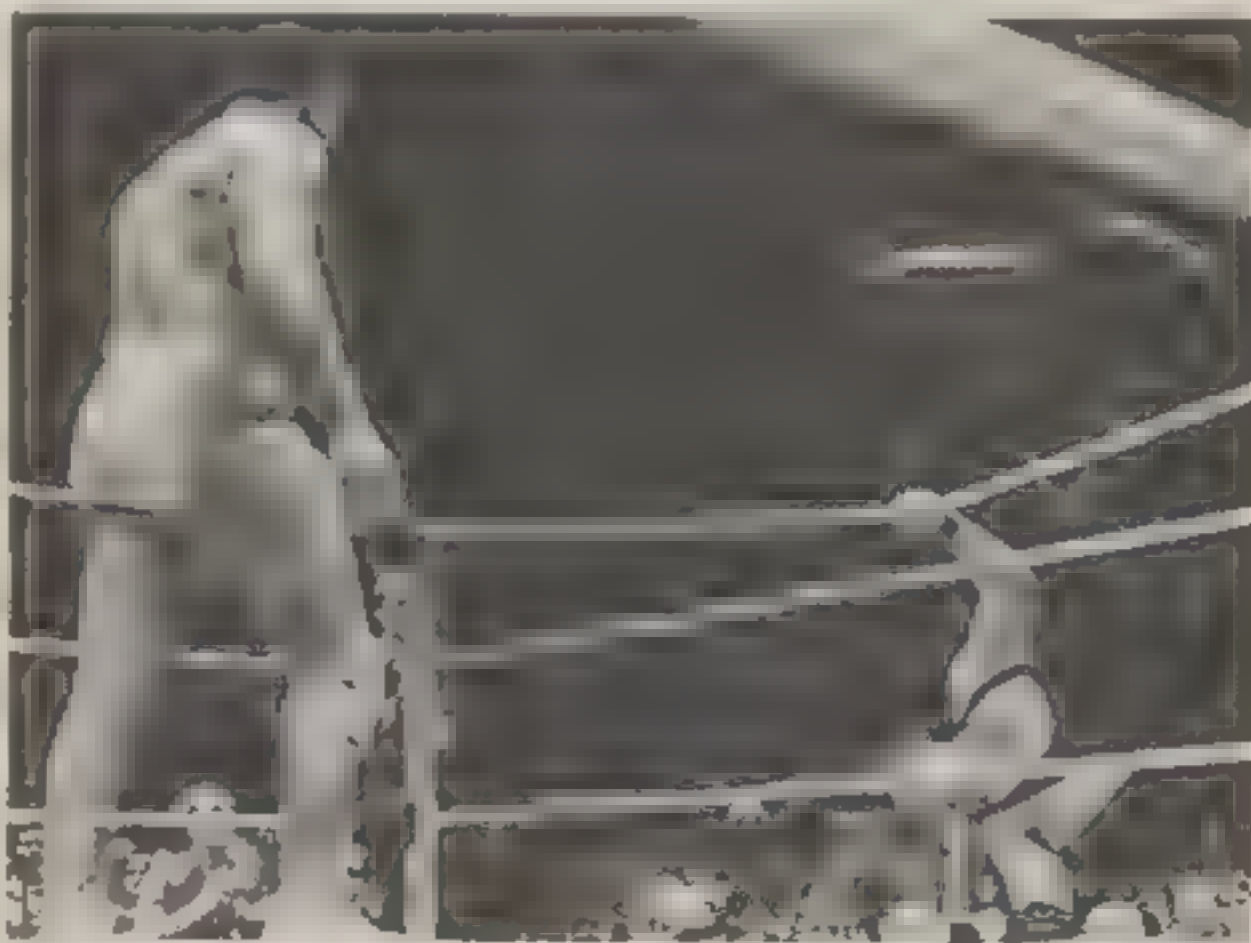
introduced himself as Sgt Slaughter. He was big, mean, tough, maybe the meanest man I ever knew. But at the time, none of us realized how cruel he was. We figured all DIs were that bad. It wasn't until the end of that first day we realized what sort of monster we were dealing with.

"We'd finished a grueling day of practice, drilling, working on the rifle range, self-defense. Our bodies ached. It was like every cell in my body was on fire. Then this Slaughter character comes in and announces we're all going on a 40-mile hike with full gear. At night."

The tic quivered at the recollection. Still Morales didn't stir.

"I will never forget that night as long as I live. I was exhausted, but so was everyone else. After the first 10 miles, I felt my legs go. After 20 miles, I thought my heart would give out. I didn't protest until we hit 30 miles. Then I said something to

Slaughter appears content to have Morales under control for a few seconds with a side headlock (above), but it was not long before Pedro was back in command and throwing the Sergeant out of the ring (below).



Sgt. Slaughter."

The young man looked down.

"I asked if I could rest for a while. Well, his face turned so red it

almost glowed in the dark. He told me just for that, I would have to carry his pack and an extra pack. I

(Continued on page 64,

PRO Wrestling ILLUSTRATED

CLOSE-UP



FOR ONE SO young, Tommy Rich's wrestling career already has taken on all the elements of a Greek drama . . . At the onset of his career, Rich's good looks, kindy manners and determined style made him an instant fan favorite . . . So taken was the American wrestling public with Rich that fan clubs sprung up from coast to coast . . . Even fellow Georgia wrestlers were eager to offer aid, notably Mr. Wrestling II . . . Week by week, Rich fought his way up the rankings, capturing coveted awards, among them *Inside Wrestling's* Future Champion Trophy . . . It was an inevitability that Rich would get a shot at Harley Race and the NWA championship . . . But Rich wasn't ready for the wily veteran and a series of matches left him dispirited, and Race still holding the title . . . The frustrations gnawed at Rich until, overcome with disappointments, he lashed

back at all around him, most importantly, himself.

Headlines of Tommy Rich turning rulebreaker in Memphis shocked the wrestling world . . . Rich repeatedly denigrated fans and former friends.

He allied himself with the likes of Jimmy Valiant and fell under the managerial tutelage of Jimmy Hart.

Not until Tojo Yamamoto and Valiant attacked Rich's mother did his current emotional condition become known to the young blond . . . In a painful public apology, Rich confessed to his sins and announced he was rejoining the ranks of the scientific wrestling world . . . Fans everywhere breathed a sigh of relief . . . Rich has recently returned to Georgia, where once again the fans have made him among the most popular wrestlers in the sport. □

PRO Wrestling ILLUSTRATED

CLOSE-UP

FAVORITE MANEUVER

"Oh, I'm awfully proud of my sleeperhold. In my opinion, the sleeperhold is the most dangerously effective maneuver on the face of the earth. In the hands of the right person it can neutralize and destroy an opponent. But you have to be careful and always follow the unwritten rule to revive your foe."



GREATEST MATCH

"I don't have to think long on that one, maybe about three seconds. Harley Race for the NWA title. You know, some matches are burnt into your brain. You can never shake the memory of them. My match against Race, the disappointment of not beating him, the wonder about what was wrong with me, really hurt. Yes, that was my greatest match."



TOUGHEST OPPONENT

"Gotta be Ivan Koloff. Man, that is one rough dude. There isn't any trick in the book that Russian doesn't know. He loves to hurt people. I think he gets a lot of satisfaction out of hurting his opponents. But he is very difficult to defeat. Believe me, I've tried."



MOST HATED

"I hate that Baron Von Raschke. He is a true evil man. He cannot smile, not even for a second. His face is always set in a scowl and his mind is always racing on how to apply a move that will leave his opponent crippled. If you needed one wrestler to define rulebreaker, it would be Baron Von Raschke."

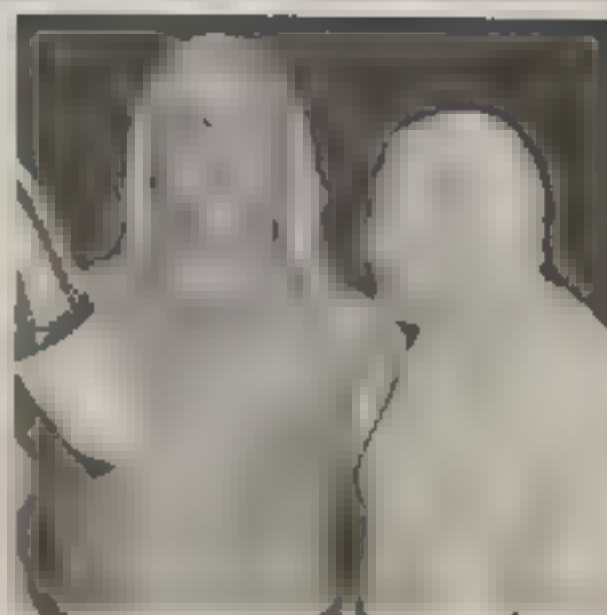
Hulk Hogan & Fred Blassie

PHOTOS BY JIM CORNELL

HAS THEIR PARTNERSHIP DISSOLVED?

THE STEWARDESS HAD to get out the seatbelt extension. To herself, she cursed the man who would make her job an ordeal. It was hard enough to keep people in their seats during a regular flight. With a celebrity like Hulk Hogan, passengers would be walking through the aisles all through the flight.

The stewardess need not have worried. Not a soul approached Hogan. The black scowl clouding his face kept everyone at a distance. During the flight, he spoke to no one and no one spoke to him.



Hulk Hogan seems to be ignoring his manager, Fred Blassie, before a match in New York (above). In a surprise move, Hogan signed to wrestle Jerry Lawler in Memphis (below left and right).

Memphis," Hogan cursed, first of many stops. I'm my own man now, and no one tells me what to do.

Everyone who heard Hogan muttering under his breath knew better than to ask for an explanation. It was a good bet Freddie Blassie was saying something similar about Hogan right at that very moment. None of the passengers wanted Hogan to mistake them for Blassie. As one passenger remarked, "I'd really like his autograph. But I don't want Hogan taking his anger out on me!"



Not too long ago, the partnership of Fred Blassie and Hulk Hogan appeared indestructible. Blassie has the brains, experience, and contacts. Hogan had the size, the strength, the youth, and good looks. Together their ambitions welded and became one, focused on the WWF title of Bob Backlund. Now, it may have all come undone.



Hogan wasted little time in signing a contract with Jimmy Hart for his Memphis appearances. Hart wasted little time in putting Hogan in the ring against the man he hates most, Jerry Lawler

When Hogan arrived in Memphis, he took a cab to the arena. He wanted to inspect the premises when no one else was around. His manager, Blassie, usually does that for him. This time, Hogan was on his own. He had to take care of things for himself.

After the inspection was over, and everything was to Hulk's liking, he checked in with the promoter. The first thing the man asked was "Where's Blassie?" The next thing he asked was "Why'd you kick my wastebasket across the room?"

"Blassie isn't my shadow!"

Hogan snapped. "I do things on my own. The only person who looks after me is me. I'm tired of paying a man to stab me in the back. Blassie has a contract to manage me in the WWF. That's all he has."

"You sure?" the promoter asked. "I don't want to get involved in some contract dispute."

"Don't worry. Blassie doesn't give a damn about me, anyway. After all I've done for him, he never got me one lousy title match in Madison Square Garden. Stan Hansen, his other boy, has a lease on the place. I



Hogan uses his tremendous height and strength advantage to lift Lawler into the air and throw him clear across the ring.

can't stand to see Blassie and Hansen one more time. That's why I took this match."

"Do me a favor," the promoter asked timidly, "let Jimmy Hart manage you tonight. He's looking for a wrestler to beat Jerry Lawler. There's a healthy bounty for the guy who does it. You hook up with Hart and the bounty is yours."

Hogan sat silent for a while. "When you signed me," he wanted to know, "did you figure I'd come with Blassie?"

"No," the promoter admitted. "I figured you two weren't seeing eye to eye. I also figured you and Hart would be good for each other. If you're good for each other, you'll be good for Memphis wrestling."

Hogan sat silently again. "It's a deal. Where do I find Hart? And I want the promise of a bounty in writing."

An hour later, Hart and Hogan were signing their contract. Hogan smiled, realizing how much he wanted to be on his own. Still, a man has to be willing to compromise if it will



Lauder had some important factors working in his favor: he has a tremendous knowledge of his sport and he has the loyal backing of the Memphis fans. He also has as much guts as any man in the sport. He had the courage and fortitude to battle back after taking a tremendous beating from Hogan and Hart while the referee was unconscious.

bring him glory

The night of the match, Hogan was standing tall in his corner, revelling in the crowd's boos. By his side stood Jimmy Hart, a cunning smirk etched upon his lips. Across from them stood Jerry Lawler, the man Hart hates most. The match was about to begin.

The bell rang. Hart stood just outside the ring while the two warriors locked in battle. Throughout most of the brawl, neither man could gain a legitimate advantage. In this kind of situation, Hogan resorts to dirty tricks. True to form, he

smashed Lawler into the referee.

Jerry and the official sprawled on the canvas. Hogan then tried a legdrive, his most fearsome maneuver, on Lawler. At the last instant, Lawler rolled away and Hogan crashed to the canvas. Hart saw this and sprang into action.

Lawler just started pounding Hogan when he felt a cane crack across his back. He collapsed and then felt the wrath of Hogan and Hart. Who knows how long the battering might have continued if the referee hadn't luckily recovered. Seeing the

illegal double-teaming, the referee immediately disqualified Hogan, awarding the match to Lawler.

Lawler wasn't finished though. He grabbed the broken cane and started getting a little revenge of his own. Hogan and Hart fled to the dressing room, but not before they felt the cane batter them a bit.

Afterwards, Hogan and Hart went out to celebrate. They wouldn't say what caused the celebration. However, one can guess that back in New York Freddie Blassie could have been a lot happier. □

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ **WRESTLING** ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

ENQUIRER

MURACO INVADES WWF!

Vows To Destroy Backlund

BY BILL APTER

NEW YORK, NY—Leave it to the Grand Wizard to find yet another big, mean, young rule-breaker. Wz has an uncanny ability to find men for his evil purposes, and he found a good one in Don Muraco.

Plain Mean

"Donald Muraco is a fine man, a good man, a talented man, a

man who will someday end the reign of Robert Backlund and take from that young coward the WWF title which belongs to me, and us," said Wizard. "I predict that Robert Backlund will run from the ring, bleeding from every part of his body, and Mr Donald Muraco will be the new WWF champion."



DUCKING DONALD: The Grand Wizard of Wrestling insists that WWF champion Bob Backlund is doing everything he can to avoid the challenge of his newest star Don "Magnificent" Muraco (in command, above).

'Get Race' Fuller Tells Partner DiBiase



FULLER'S BRUSH: No, Robert Fuller has not given Ted DiBiase (above) the brush off. He simply wants his friend to concentrate on Harley Race's NWA title

BY DAN SHOCKET

ATLANTA, GA—This is quite a friendship. Rarely will you find one member of a tag team voluntarily telling his partner to split the team so that man can further his own personal ambitions.

"I wouldn't be mad if Ted left the tag team to go after Harley Race," said Robert Fuller. "While I'd miss having him as my partner, I know how badly he wants that NWA title. I told him to get Race, even if it meant the end of the tag team. I sure hope that gets through his thick skull. I only want the best for him."

DiBiase is scheduled to wrestle Race twice during the spring

Update On Bruno Jr.

BY STU SAKS

RICHMOND, VA When Bruno Sammartino Jr. first entered professional wrestling, a lot of people belittled him and said the only reason he got as far as he did was because of his father. Well, Bruno Jr. is thriving in the Mid-Atlantic area, showing the same tenacity and courage which made his father a legend, and which will make Bruno Jr. a superstar in his own right.

"You know, I really like wrestling in the Mid-Atlantic area," the junior Sammartino said. "I enjoy the competition and I enjoy the fans. I am learning a lot, about life and wrestling. While I still have a lot to learn, I know I am on the right road." Young Bruno remains undefeated in his brief career.

Regal Attacks, Injures Friend Santana

BY PETER KING

MINNEAPOLIS, MN—Any day two friends break up is a sorry day for wrestling. And a real sorry day recently ended the friendship of Tito Santana and Steve Regal. For no apparent reason at all, Regal attacked Santana. A bloody Santana required 12 stitches to close the wound.

"I owe Tito Santana nothing," hissed Regal later. "He's a liar and a cheat. I'll tell my story when I damn well please, but Santana better watch his butt 'cause I'm

Sunshine State Hosts War Of The Masks

BY STEVE FARHOOD

TAMPA, FL—There's a war of masks going on down here in Florida as fan favorite Sweet Brown Sugar takes on Assassin #1 and Assassin #3.

"They disgrace the dignity of wearing a mask," explained Sugar. "To me, growing up, wearing a mask was a special sort of thing. Only the greats wore masks. And only people who have class should wear masks."

Assassin #3 disagrees.

"Only reason Sugar wears a mask is his ugly face," he shouted. "You'll see, I'll rip that mask off his ugly kisser sooner than you can count to three."

gonna own it mighty soon."

As for Santana, he could only shake his head and sigh with deep sadness while the doctor ministered to him in the dressing room.

Finally, Santana composed himself and could speak.

"It hurts me very much for a guy I called friend, a man who I thought was my best friend, someone I took to my house for dinner, that this man would come and attack me. Well, he will be very sorry for this. No one gets away with this," Santana snarled.

AROUND THE GLOBE

JACKSONVILLE, FL

The Assassins defeated the team of Barry Windham and Manny Fernandez to capture the North American tag team championship. Manager Sir Oliver Humperdink, back to his rulebreaking philosophy, calls his new champions "The undisputed tag team kings of the universe."

GREENSBORO, NC

Unable to regain the NWA tag team belts they lost to Ray Stevens and Ivan Koloff, Paul Jones and Masked Superstar may split up and try to find challenges in singles competition.

OMAHA, NE

Baron Von Raschke, in the AWA to get a title shot with Verne Gagne, has become embroiled in a vicious feud with another AWA rulebreaker, Crusher Blackwell. Blackwell, too, seeks an opportunity to wrestle for Gagne's belt.

ALLENTOWN, PA

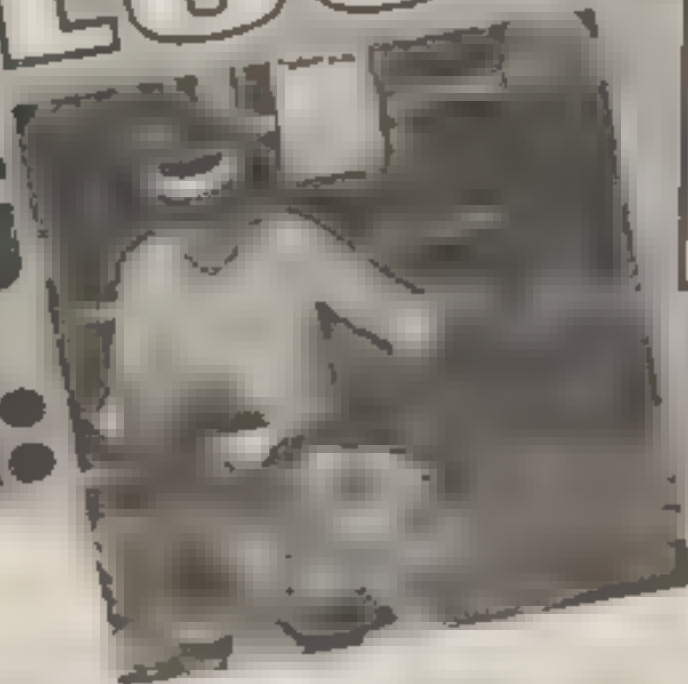
Pat Patterson says he broke out of Sgt. Slaughter's "Cobra" hold and demands that the Sergeant turn over the \$10,000 he promised Pat if he could indeed break the grip. Slaughter refuses to pay saying "let him out of it. He did not break it."

LOS ANGELES, CA

A war has erupted between former rivals—and former friends. Victor Rivera is on the warpath against John "Golden Greek" Tolos. Although the fans are cheering Victor, they really do not trust him.

LOOKING AT...

Matt Brock:



I'M LOOKING AT a scoundrel. A real scoundrel. A real talented scoundrel. And like a lot of scoundrels, this one has charm the kind of charm which leaves you wondering where your watch went.

His name is Roddy Piper and he is United States heavyweight champion, a title he won from Ric Flair. We won't go into that match. Or even Piper's subsequent matches. No, I want to look at this guy real carefully. Either I'm looking at the wrestler of the future or a freak.

Piper is brilliant. He has a pure innate genius which lights up a room. Throw him any concept whatsoever and he can rearrange the particles of your very thoughts and redistribute the atoms so you wonder how in heaven's name he managed to come up with that conclusion. But if you think about his mental processes, you realize he's correct.

But that's only a neat parlor trick unless you can utilize the intelligence toward something. Anything. I don't care if you're scientific wrestler or rulebreaker, as long as you channel it toward something which shows the effects of your allegedly superior mind.



Roddy Piper has the unique ability to think and act in the ring at the same time, rather than just react to a given situation. Above, Piper inflicts pain on Ric Flair, from whom he captured the U.S. title.

So far, Piper has done just that. He has uncanny capacity to anticipate. Few fans realize just how critical this knack is and how it can turn a loss into a win. The greats like Bruno Sammartino or Harley Race have this gift. So does Piper. But he brings an added

RODDY PIPER



ingredient to this talent

Whereas the majority of wrestlers merely react, Piper manages to think and act at the same time. It's as if he has a strategy for every conceivable circumstance. I have yet to see him surprised by anything. That is amazing

Additionally, Piper is one gutsy dude. He can stand there and absorb punishment without fear ever once flickering across his Scottish features. Again, it isn't as if Piper doesn't feel pain. No matter what he might say, he is still flesh and blood, a mere mortal. But he knows what pain can do, or rather, what allowing pain to rule one's life can do. He won't give in to pain. He won't submit

Somehow, Roddy Piper can keep his brain functioning on another facet of his game and ignore the punishment bombarding his nervous system.

Now, it could be said Piper hasn't met anyone tough enough to disrupt this facade. Not true. He had to beat Ric Flair for the title, didn't he? He defended his championship against Rick Steamboat, didn't he? And he has a lot of rough customers in the Mid-Atlantic area, notably Masked Superstar and Paul Jones.

What worries me about Piper is

he may indeed become invincible. His mind may evolve to that incredible level that his body will become immune to trivial items like headlocks and figure-four leglocks.

If that occurs, it really won't matter whether he is a freak or vanguard of a new era. Roddy Piper will rule for a thousand years and there won't be a blasted thing anyone will be able to do. □



On the attack, Piper backs Rick Steamboat into a corner. It is when being attacked however, when Roddy is most unbelievable. The Scot has an uncanny knack for absorbing punishment.

THE VIOLENT WORLD OF



HOW MANY TIMES had Dusty Rhodes been in this situation? Blood gushed from deep gashes along his forehead. Sitting at the training table, he awaited the doctor to come and stitch the wounds. Bloody, battered, aching all over, why the hell was he so happy?

The doctor walked in. He cleaned the wound and examined the cut. "Another Rhodes special," he declared, "maybe 15 stitches. Wrestlers like you are crazy. For some of you, it's only in matches that are bloodbaths where you become majestic. You know how good you were tonight, don't you?"

"Yeah," Dusty said through clenched teeth, trying not to yell as the needle slipped into his flesh. "I know how good I was. And I know I was at my best."

"Are you proud of that?"

"I'm proud of being at my best. I'm resigned to what I have to do to be at my best."

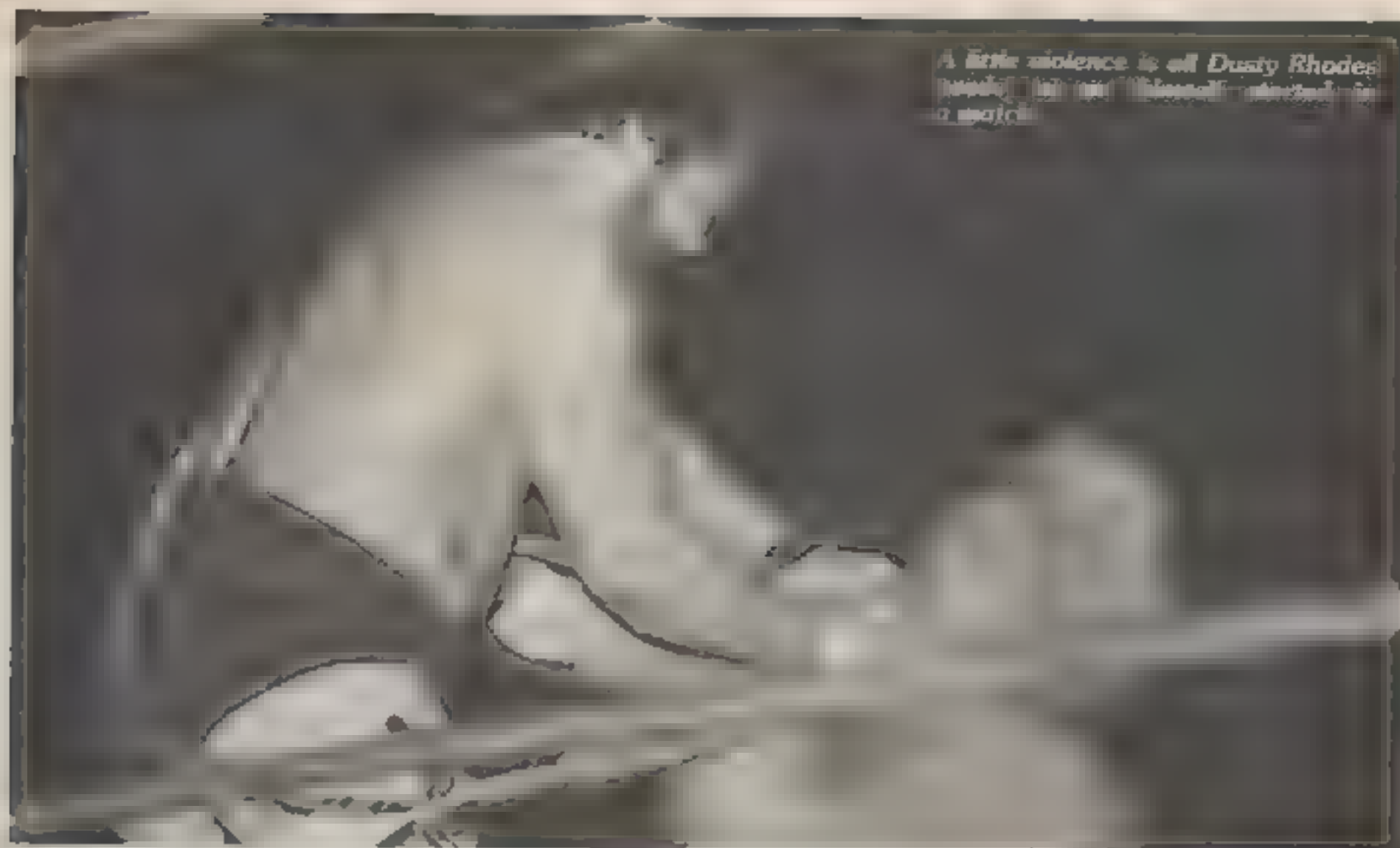
"It doesn't have to be like this, you know."

"That's where you're wrong, Doc. It does have to be like this. I don't know why, but that's the way it is. I might as well try to catch the wind as try to change."

The doctor shook his head. Long ago, he made peace with the fact that wrestlers would bleed and he'd stitch them up. Still, he didn't understand why so many of them are at their best when they're most like animals. What is it—the blood, the possibility of permanent injury, approaching the borderline between life and death? He

DUSTY RHODES

A little violence is all Dusty Rhodes needs to get his blood started in a match.



People need air, food, and water to live. Not Dusty Rhodes. All the American Dream needs is violence. He needs the violence of the ring. He needs a good, old-fashioned brawl. When deprived of this necessary violence, Rhodes finds himself unable to wrestle up to his normal standards.

Once Dusty tastes his own blood, he is able to unleash all of his stored-up hatred.



PHOTOS BY BRAD McFARLIN

didn't understand it, though the matches fascinated him. He didn't make much money in this job, but he'd pay to do it.

As for Rhodes, he considered pain the price he had to pay. He loves violence, feeds on its horror. His best matches are the bloodiest.

After a series of scientific battles, he needs a brawl to get back his edge. It's necessary, like oxygen.

For years, Dusty tried to deny it. He struggled against himself to be a pure scientific wrestler. When he felt himself get reckless, savage, he would try to control it. He would

will himself to regain control. Yet, as surely as time passes, Rhodes would find himself at the mercy of senses his mind couldn't control. Then, he'd wrestle wild and free, his movement a symphony of power and speed. Afterwards, bleeding and in agony, he'd never



be happier

He couldn't explain it and he gave up trying to stop it. Rhodes needs the uncontrolled violence and—damn it!—he enjoys it. The delight in being purely physical, purely instinctual, made him happiest. "In the best of all possible

worlds," Dusty has said, "I'd always be at my best in scientific matches. I wish they were enough, but they're not.

The record shows Dusty is right. His matches against men like Bob Backlund are excellent displays of classical wrestling. People admire

their technique, wrestling brilliance, and sportsmanship. Yet, they never achieve the magic that occurs when Dusty wrestles against Ole Anderson, Harley Race, Baron Von Raschke or The Sheik. These down-in-the-dirt battles are splendid in ways that are beyond description.

Rhodes knows this, though he can't say he's happy about it. "Maybe one of the reasons I enjoy brawls so much," he muses, "is that the fans get so excited. When I feel them cheering me as if it was the most important thing in the world, that's when I'm most alive. Hell, if you said my life really happened at those moments and the rest was just waiting, I couldn't really call you wrong.

"I wish it wasn't like that. A man should always follow the rules, be a beacon of honesty. The lowest kind of rat breaks rules. Yeah, I'd like everything to be like it should be. But life doesn't work that way. Nobody is perfect. I have to break the rules to feel alive. The fans need me to break the rules to be at their most excited. I wish it was different, I really do. But you got to play it as it lays. I'm playing it for all it's worth.

"Hell, it's not like I go after people who can't take care of themselves. Can anyone feel sorry if Baron Von Raschke gets hurt? Does Harley Race really need someone to protect him? I'm no bully. But I'm no choirboy, either. If a man wants a brawl, then let him come to me. I'm ready and willing."

The scars on Dusty's face tell the story. He's been battered, pummeled and wounded. At his best, he's a furious force of violence. He wishes things were different. But since they're not, he's ready to take on anyone who dares to face him. No holds barred. No mercy given or expected. Start at the bell.

And end with the doctor putting stitches into his head. □

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**ON
ASSIGNMENT**

(Continued from Page 12)



Except for the fact that he lost \$55, Farhood fondly remembers the time when Captain Lou Albano involved a large gathering of snow-bound travelers at New York's LaGuardia Airport in a game of blackjack.

● Working on a story with Dan Shocket in Florida I've been a wrestling writer a relatively short time. Shocket, however, has been around. His reputation precedes him everywhere he goes. We were eating lunch in a diner in Tampa when a pair of teenage kids came up to us. In chorus, they yelled, "You rulebreaker lover." Then the older of the two turned over Dan's plate, sending his chili-cheeseburger all over his lap. They both ran away. Danny never flinched. It's happened before.

● Snowbound at LaGuardia Airport with Lou Albano. "The Captain takes out a deck of playing cards and begins to deal blackjack. We're only playing for nickels and dimes. But before you know it, half of the people waiting for our plane surround us. The Captain assumes the role of carnival barker and tells them to get out their loose

change. Within minutes, he's dealing them all in. It was a sensational scene. Albano definitely has some Groucho Marx in him.

● And probably the highlight of my professional career: The Annual Professional Wrestling Writers Awards Dinner, this year held at the Fairmont Hotel in Greensboro. The big moment is the award for Wrestling Journalist of the Year.

When the winner was announced, no one was surprised. After all, it was the fifth straight year he won it, and the 12th time overall. Despite the obvious choice, those in attendance—writers, promoters, managers, wrestlers, fans, friends, and family—rose as one and united in a two-minute standing ovation. It brought tears to my eyes, and I wasn't the only one with my face buried in a napkin. We love ya, Matt. And we hope you live forever. □

KING'S COURT

(Continued from Page 6)

around the ring, pointing at the empty chair, pointing at himself, and then pointing at Patterson. "Get in here, Patterson," Slaughter screamed. "If you can escape the Clutch, I'll give you \$10,000! But we all know you're too yellow."

A confused and angry Patterson approached the ring, microphone in hand. Slaughter stepped through the ropes and an argument erupted between the two. The first blow was landed by Slaughter—a slap to the face. It was not meant to hurt, it was meant to insult. It did its job well.

Pat Patterson ripped off his sport jacket and tore off his shirt. He climbed into the ring and immediately sat in the chair. "C'mon slaughter, let's go," he said.

At first Slaughter looked as if he would walk away. Perhaps he never thought Patterson would accept the challenge. Perhaps he was frightened of Patterson's strength. Or maybe, he was just afraid his check would bounce.

Finally, Slaughter stepped into the ring and approached Patterson. Slaughter's huge arms locked around Patterson's neck. The referee waved his arm, signalling for the challenge to begin. The fans stood and screamed. The two wrestlers struggled with every ounce of their strength.

What happened? Well, in the tradition of the great Hollywood cliffhangers, you'll have to wait for the next installment. You can read the conclusion of this story in the next issue of *The Wrestler* (the July edition) on sale May 12. □

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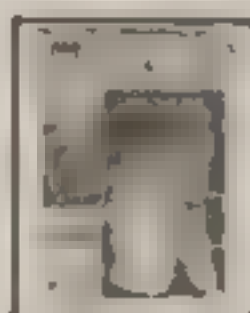
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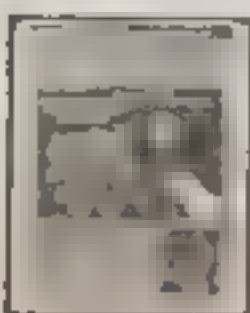
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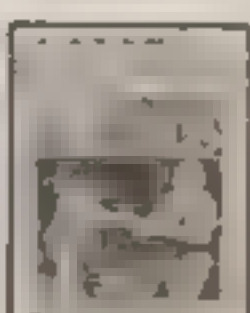
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(Continued from Page 8.)

Don Muraco's "Asiatic Spike" is creating quite a controversy in the WWF. Muraco's manager, Grand Wizard, claims Bob Backlund is trying to get the maneuver banned.

terrorizing every scientific wrestler in the state. I'm gonna get myself a good partner, maybe Ted DiBiase, and run those dudes' butts out of this state!

According to the Grand Wizard WWF manager of Magnificent Muraco, Bob Backlund is doing everything he can to weasel out of a match with him. "That coward is circulating a petition to get Magnificent Don's favorite hold, the Asiatic Spike, banned. What a sissy Backlund is! If you can't take it Mr. Howdy Doody Backlund, get out of the great sport of wrestling. This is the sport of kings, and I have the king of kings, Magnificent Muraco."

The newly formed duo of Mr. Fun and Tenru have won the Mid-Atlantic tag team title from George Wells and Dewey Robertson. Captain Lou Albano is confident

that King Kong Mosca will easily whip Bob Backlund for the WWF title... Former Olympic star Brad Rheingans owns a disqualification victory over ex-AWA champion Nick Bockwinkel. Brad considers that the highlight of his young professional career "I beat him so badly he had to get disqualified to save himself from a certain pinfall loss."

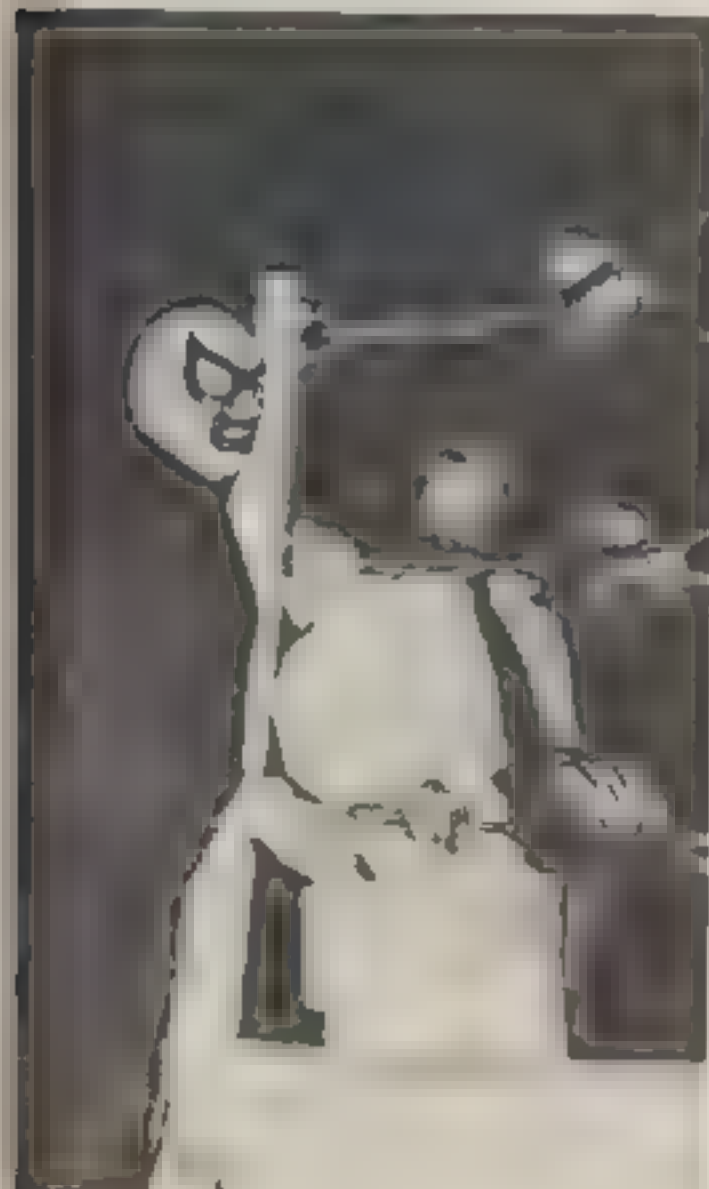
Jim Garvin is wrestling in Louisiana and hopes to clash with the Masked Grappler for the area title . . . Steve Kern won the Georgia junior national heavyweight title from Kevin Sullivan.

Greg Valentine is still negotiating with The Grand Wizard to wrestle in the WWF... Ah Mustafa and Hercules Ayala are ripping opponents apart in Texas.

The Funks, Dory Jr. and Terry.

he wanted to come out to dinner with me," Dusty said, grabbing a glass of chocolate milk. "He said he would like to, but he had some family matters to attend to."

"I didn't even think at the time that he used to call his rule-breakers 'family.' Well, this family is made up of Assassins."



It all ended so quickly. Humperdink accompanied Dusty to the ring for his match against Assassin #1. Dusty took command of the match from the start and it appeared that Assassin #1 would not last long. Then, in clear sight of almost everyone, including Dusty, Humperdink slipped Assassin #1 brass knuckles. Dusty was too shocked to react, and he was soon beaten into a bloody pulp.

Dusty shoved a full plate of pancakes away from himself. He couldn't eat.

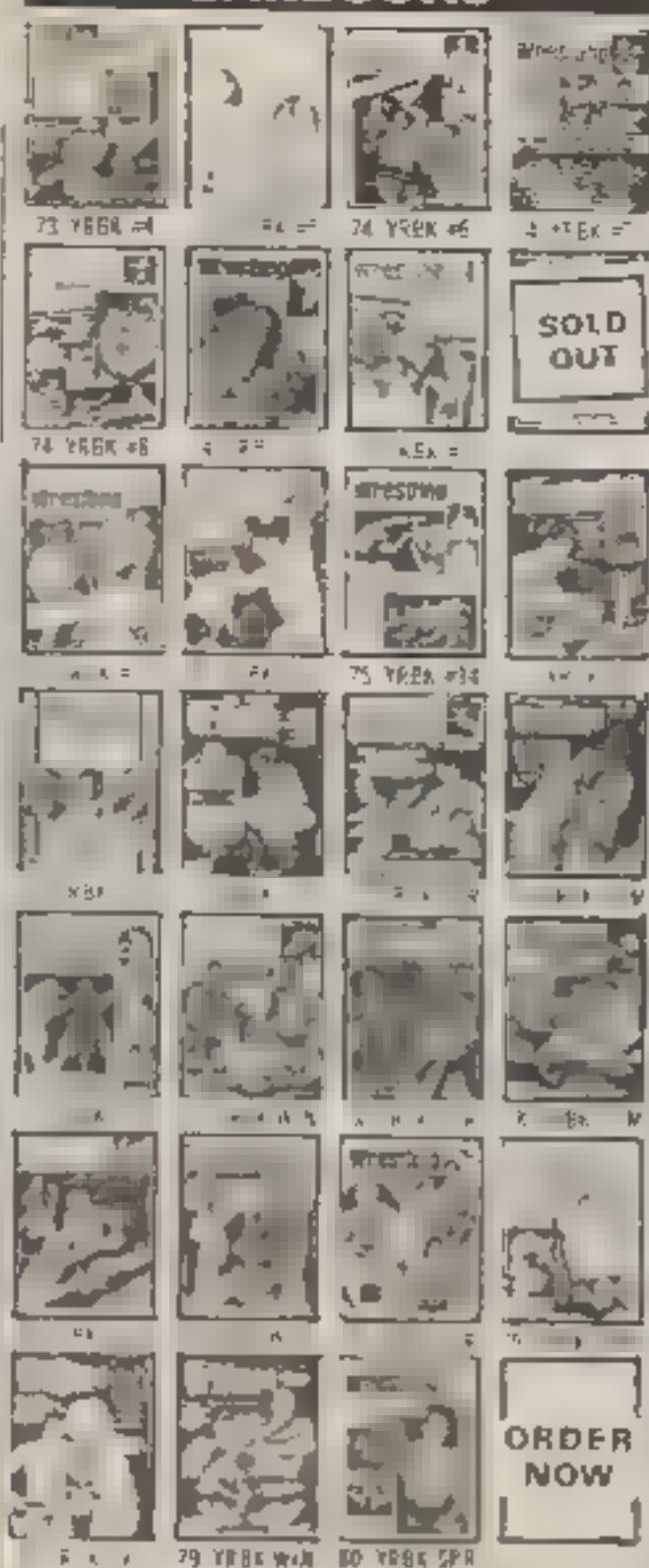
"I feel betrayed," he said.

But I don't think Dusty really means to say "betrayed." You can only be betrayed by a friend. Humperdink was never Dusty's friend. ☐

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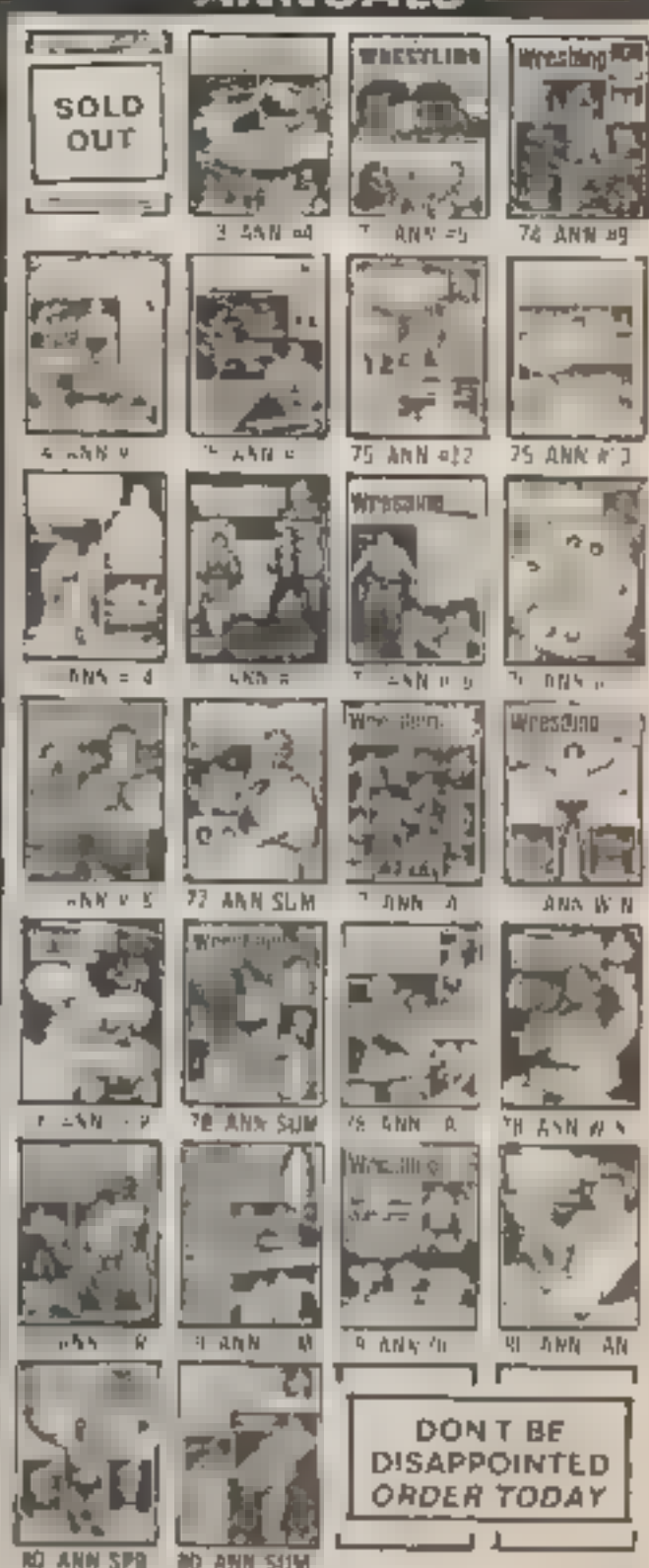
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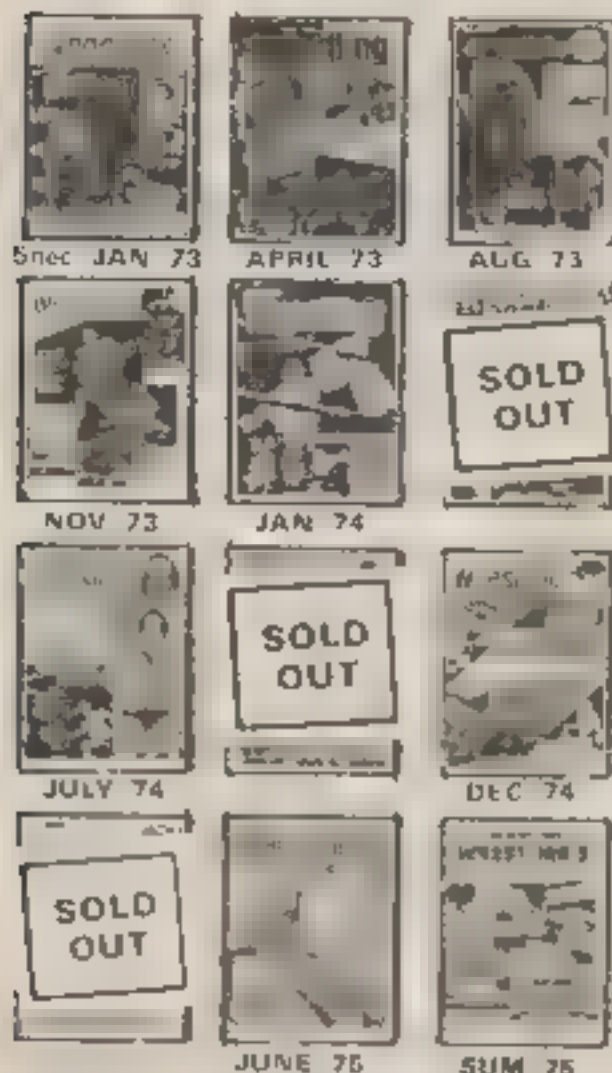
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MORGENSTEIN REPORT

(Continued from Page 18)

HUMPERDINK TURNS BAD ... AGAIN!

Just when I'd thought Oliver Humperdink had finally put his sordid past behind him, he goes and turns bad again. What does the portly rulebreaking manager think he can accomplish through these evil means? Damned if I know. He is quite intelligent, quite shrewd with an instinctive knack for making the right decisions. If he's directed his energies toward amassing an empire of clean, fair wrestlers, Humperdink could have become one of the greatest managers of all-time. Yet he insists in slipping back into this cesspool of easy ambition, earning widespread contempt and engaging himself in new and costly feuds. Such a waste of talent.

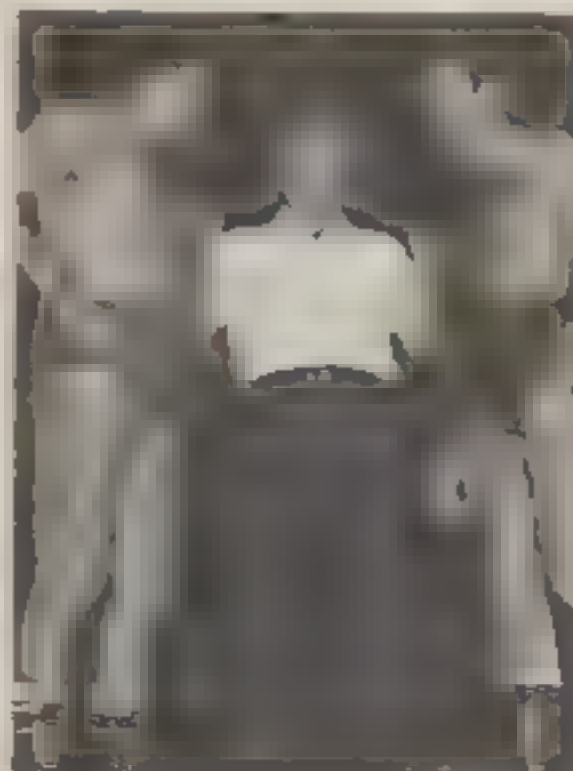


SIR OLIVER HUMPERDINK

But I won't shed many tears for Humperdink. This was his decision, and one I am sure all of the Florida scientific wrestling community will make him regret.

THE RETURN OF LOU THESZ

Well, I am simply amazed by this man. Here is someone who first broke into wrestling back in 1933, who first won a world championship in 1937, returning to the wrestling



ROBINSON VS. THESZ

wars. Now, if Thesz were out of shape, that would be understandable. If the man threatened to make a fool of himself, that would be understandable. But he doesn't. In all seriousness, Thesz is in better shape than a lot of other wrestlers I've seen 20 years his junior. There's not an ounce of fat on the man. His reflexes are incredible, his timing superb, his mind razor-sharp. When I heard Thesz would be wrestling Billy Robinson for the CWA championship, I cancelled all commitments and raced down to witness this match. Thesz demonstrated enormous stamina. He displayed maneuvers I'd never seen before. I do wish this youthful senior citizen all the luck in the world and hope he's successful in his comeback plans.

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MIL MASCARAS

(Continued from Page 31)

Mil is friendly with one of the staff aides to the NWA Board of Commissioners. From that person, Mil learned who had proposed the new ruling and who had pushed for its adoption.

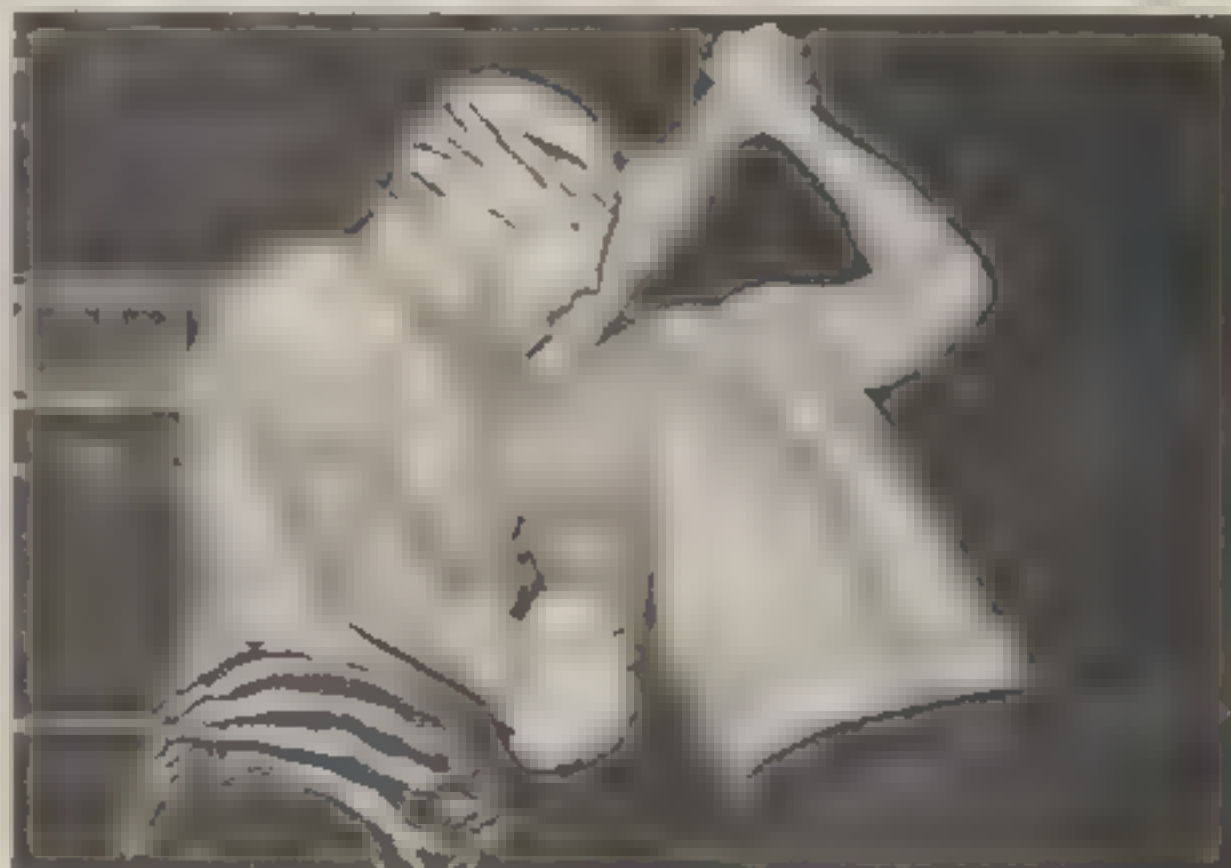
"He sounded strange to me," said Mil.

Then Mil learned the physical description of this person. It evoked a faint remembrance in

that brilliant masked mind. Suddenly Mil had a hunch.

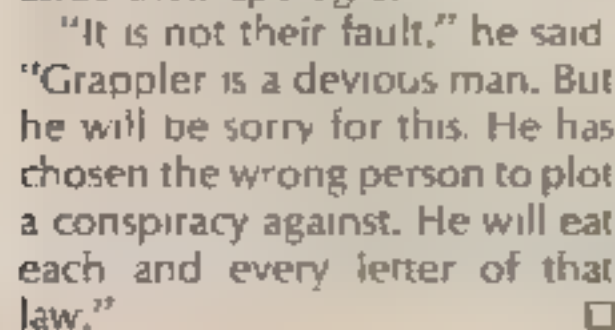
"That guy sounded familiar, I just could not figure out exactly who he was, but it nagged at me. I tried to recall if, I had any enemy in the world, who would fit that description," said Mil. "Then it hit me one day."

Mil called the Board of Commissioners, all seven, asking



Though Mascaras is known for his speed and wrestling knowledge, there aren't many wrestlers who could match him in the strength department either (above). Mascaras' dropkick finds his opponent's chin (below).





22

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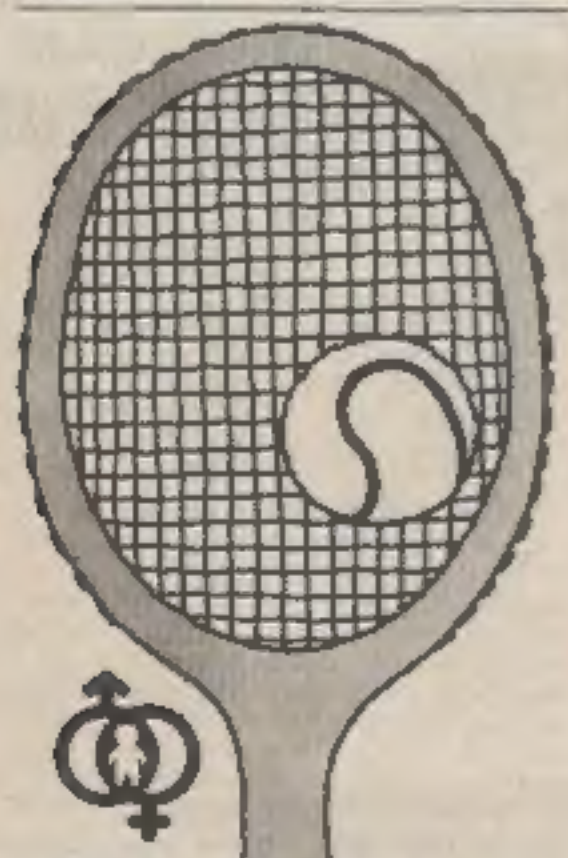
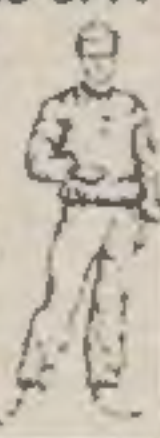
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Sgt. Slaughter

(Continued from Page 34)



Slaughter has too much cruelty in his background to allow him to give up. He hammerlocks Morales (above) and works him over outside the ring (below). Never forgetting the poor crippled recruit, Pedro resorts to a face-rake (opposite right).



said I couldn't. He told me if I didn't obey, he would have me shot and he would be the one to do it. At that point, he unsnapped his holster and I thought it best to obey.

"If I'd known what would have happened to me, I would have chosen an execution."

The young man followed orders. The result was something he would have the rest of his natural life. As Morales watched, the former Marine stood, reached for his crutches and hobbled to the door. As he struggled to open the door, Morales offered aid. The youngster shook his head.

"No, Mr. Morales, I don't want

aid. And I don't want any sympathy. I just wanted to tell you this story because, well, because I respect and admire you. I just wanted the whole world to know what kind of person has been let loose on the wrestling world."

Morales sat alone in silence for several minutes, desperately trying to control his anger. When finished, his decision was clear.

"I am going to pay back that Slaughter," raged Morales. "I will make him regret what he done to that poor boy. I not afraid of him. I want that young boy to know he has a friend, and I will make Slaughter have great pain for doing such a terrible, terrible thing

to him.

"I ready for that Slaughter. I ready for any kinda fight. I ready to knock him from one end of the ring to the other. I ready to make him bleed. I ready for anything. I will make Slaughter very regretful of what he done to that boy."

Informed of the youngster's visit to Morales and the Intercontinental champion's reaction, Slaughter simply laughed.

"I'd like to say I remember which gutless coward recruit it was, but I



can't. I was surrounded by so many misfits in the Marines I'd need 10 years to remember which one of 'em whined and cried and lied their ways out of training. He was crippled, you say? Well, that's life, life is cruel, you gotta be tough to make it in this world and those that can't fall by the wayside.

"You think I'm gonna worry about misfits with no guts who can't hack it? The hell I will. If they can't follow orders, if they're not man enough to make it, then they might as well be dead. Which brings me to Morales. Tell him I'd like nothing better than to put him through a Sgt. Slaughter basic training drill. Nothing better." ☐

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WHAT THEY ARE SAYING

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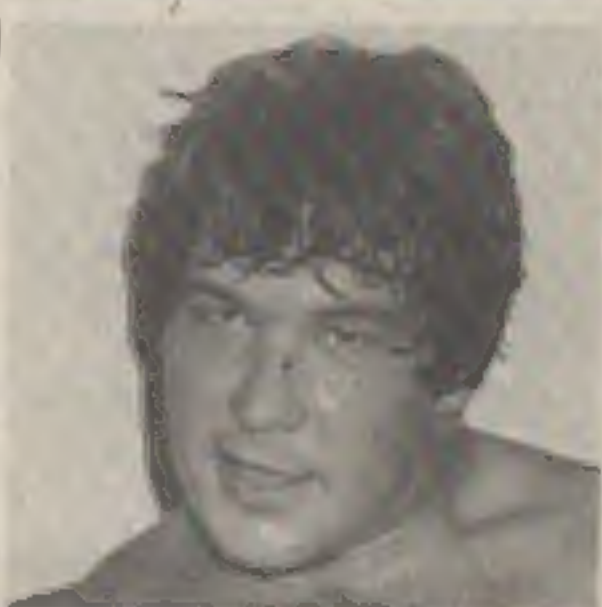
KEVIN SULLIVAN

"Poor Steve Keirn, poor little baby, he doesn't like to get his face squashed, does he? Poor baby has tried every excuse that ever was to get out of wrestling me, but I have his number. He wants to call me names, let the little brat come into the ring and back up his mouth with his fists."



TED DIBIASE

"I feel good about my chances of winning Harley Race's NWA belt. I feel I'm very, very close to getting that title. Sometimes you reach a peak in your life when everything is going well, when you're smoking on all fronts and you get this incredibly wondrous feeling you're invincible. That's how I feel."



JERRY BLACKWELL

"Not too long ago, I thought about stoppin' my feudin' with Crusher 'cause I was afraid he'd get hurt. You know, he's kinda old, must be 80 or so, and I didn't want him breakin' a hip durin' one of our matches. But he begged me to keep on wrestlin' him, said he needed the money. Kinda feel sorry for the poor old man."



IVAN KOLOFF

"I see little reason to train seriously for matches against overweight, out-of-shape Americans. Most Americans are fat slobs content to sit before their television sets with a beer in their hands. Those able to stand become wrestlers and waste my time with their puny efforts. Are there any American men?"



PRESS CONFERENCE

(Continued from Page 25)



"We are buddies, friends, members of the same corporation, possessed of the same fiery desire and ambition to clean out this here whole state . . . wipe away the garbage that's been cluttering up the area."

HAYES: Which dudes, which dudes, man oh man, you press people make me ill, really sick to my little tummy. You guys are so busy protecting the creeps down here you're lucky you can put your shoes on in the morning.

FARHOOD: Again, which dudes?

GORDY: Should we start with old man II, or II minus II equals zero, 'cause II is the biggest zero we ever did see. Should we go on to Junkyard Dog, a man with fleas and rabies and who knows what other awful diseases he's been peddlin' around and giving to the fine people known as the Fabulous Freebirds, should . . .

SAKS: Excuse me, are you saying you got a disease from Dog?

HAYES: Damn straight, when I was chained to him. I spent two weeks picking fleas outta my lovely locks. God, if I woulda had to cut my hair I woulda cut his head off.

KING: Maybe we can return to what Terry was . . .

ROBERTS: As we were saying, you press people are busy protecting dudes like Fuller, a wipeout talent if ever there was one. You keep writing stories about how great DiBiase is and I just don't see it, the man's got nothing, nothing at all, just a bum, a wimp, a fool, a moron, but you writers like him and so you say nice things about him.

SAKS: I have noticed how the three of you have the remarkable aptitude to finish each other's thoughts and

sentences.

HAYES: Because we are buddies, friends, members of the same corporation, possessed of the same fiery desire and ambition to clean out this here whole state, take our broom and wipe away the garbage that's been cluttering up the area.

GORDY: And show the whole wrestling world the has-been days are over, period, numbered, that's all folks.

ROBERTS: So when we finish our job at hand, we will rule the world and we will be at the top of the heap.

KING: Gentleman, individually and collectively, we thank you for coming on "Press Conference."

FREEBIRDS: You're oh-so-welcome! □